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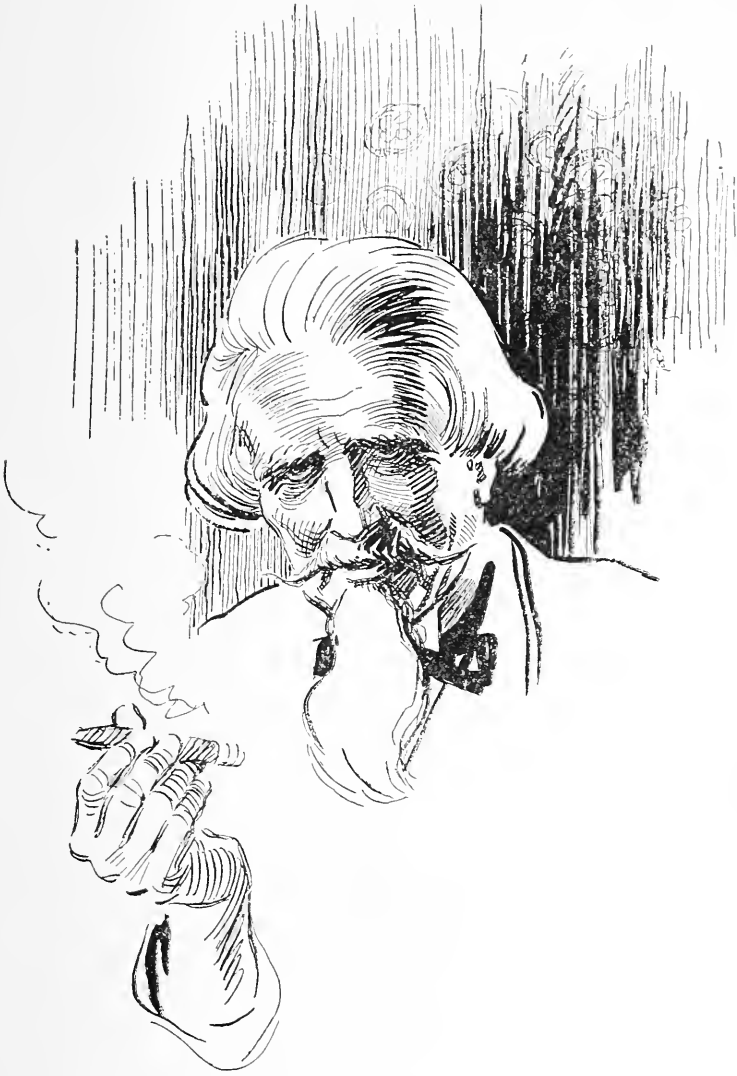
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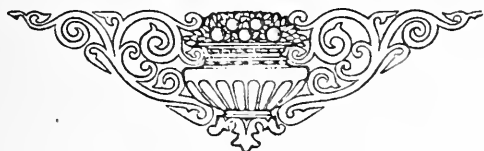


Ripley ————— 4.

COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE

COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE

Colonel Rockinghorse



A Book of Paraphrases

By William Edward

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Foreword

The chapters which follow owe their existence to no literary ambitions and the writer confesses to no pride of authorship. He has sought to picture with some accuracy a lovable and unusual personality; to preserve in some manner a record of homely philosophy and good sense. If the good Colonel's frailties appear it is because he would himself have preferred to be painted as he was, for he held no man to be worth writing of who was not worth the truth. The purpose of these pages will be served if the reader finds beneath eccentricities and old-school manner the real Colonel—very human but very wise, a simple, kindly gentleman.

W. E.

CHAPTER I.

ONE DAY OUT, IN AN EASTERLY STORM, I MET THE COLONEL.

ON MY first trip abroad, struggling against seasickness and unable to keep footing on the deserted deck, more than half convinced that no ship could withstand the seas we were weathering, I sought refuge in the smoking room and found companionship and the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

They welcomed me with the ready comradeship of fellow travelers—Livingston, an Englishman whom I had seen about Washington, Count Hirosaka, a Japanese, and Colonel Monteith Rockinghorse. I know him now for what I thought him then, a Southerner, dignified, virile, a gentleman through and through, and an inveterate storyteller. His homely philosophy and his keen insight privileged his display of contempt for insincerity and overshadowed all his faults.

Livingston had noted my evident nervousness and reassured me. Our boat was the

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staunchest in the service and he knew our Captain and placed entire confidence in him.

At the mention of the word "confidence," the Colonel settled back in his chair.

"Young men," said he, "with all due respect to the Captain, do not place too much confidence in mortal weaklings. I admit that confidence, when not abused, is a source of a great deal of satisfaction, and lack of confidence is the cause of much unpleasantness. Many men who are now behind iron bars would still be living a life of freedom, had not their employers placed confidence in them. You have only to read the daily papers. It is always the trusted employee that absconds.

"It is the confidence that lovers place in each other which allows them to partake of the sweets before the wedding bells that are never to be sounded. Confidence is so blind that it cannot distinguish between friend and foe, allowing human parasites to gain the true and earnest friendship of a victim, then to insert their blood suckers, which are not withdrawn as long as there is a drop left.



Ripley ————— Po

“THE COLONEL WOULD TAKE A
MUCH CHEAPER DRINK”

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“We must realize that until the unity of man has been established we must be careful, as confidence is such a glutton for punishment that it will stand wholesale abuse, wherever established, and I have also read in the book of Psalms that ‘It is better to trust in the Lord than to put your confidence in man.’ ”

The bugle sounded, and we rushed to our cabins to change for dinner, without giving the Colonel’s words the least consideration. The cabin steward had unpacked my trunk, put my buttons in my shirt, and laid out my dinner jacket and trousers, nicely brushed and ready to be put on. In less than ten minutes I was dressed.

Like all travellers taking their first ocean trip, my one great desire was to be at the Captain’s table, and I was highly elated when I found myself among the fortunate ones. Socially, the Captain and his table were all that could be expected, and we were the envy of many; but for some reason or other, we made no impression on the custodian of the larder. I soon learned that the Captain of

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the ship was Captain in name only, and that the real head was to be found in the person of the Chief Steward.

Gossipers are to be accosted in all walks of life, but the sea is their haven; here they come from all parts, and, if they should neglect you the first day, have no fear, they will not overlook you the next.

The steamer had scarcely left its moorings when these scandalmongers began wagging their tongues. There was aboard a well-known steel magnate, Mr. G., accompanied by his family. Also aboard was a lady who had been seen in the company of Mr. G. ashore. This lady was so congenial and liberal she was soon looked upon by the young men of the boat as a benefactress. Paint became her face so well she was actually good looking, and though I had been told that constant handling will wear out solid iron, strange to say, she showed no ill effects from it. She saw to it that every escort led her past Mr. and Mrs. G., always having a witty remark ready, so as to afford her an opportunity of laughing in the face of Mrs. G. She never missed a chance, when in sight of Mr. G., to

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make assiduous love to some young man, much to Mr. G.'s annoyance, though he tried his best to appear unconcerned.

Upon seeing Mr. G. in the smoking room in a fit of melancholy, the Colonel said: "Morality produces contentment and immorality discontentment. Show me a man who attempts a dual life and I shall show you an ass who has sought a burden heavier than he can bear, and as he staggers along beneath the ponderous double yoke, he will encounter difficulties and perplexities that will rack his brain and plague his heart, and finally, broken down in health and mind, collapse ignominiously in despair."

Thus did the old gentleman ever point out to us the disadvantages of the wrong side of life, yet he was not so narrow minded that he objected to anyone enjoying life, which you will perceive as we go along.

CHAPTER II.

THE COLONEL'S RACING STORY.

I HAD intended spending quite a bit of my time in reading, but between deck games and frequent trips to the smoking room, I found little time for books.

Our circle took active part in everything, deck golf and tennis, quoits, shuffle and buck-board, and, in the tournaments entered all events, whether proficient in them or not. Becoming overheated, we frequently retreated for cooling drinks. The bar man made the most delightful champagne cocktails; the price, two shillings, I thought quite reasonable.

The Colonel would invariably take a much cheaper drink, at the same time taking some small silver from one pocket and putting it into another. I did not consider him stingy nor frugal, and growing inquisitive, I asked why he did it. Instead of taking offense at my rudeness he seemed rather pleased. He said every time he drank a bottle of expensive

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wine, he could not help thinking how much good the money would do among some people he had seen in an unfortunate condition. Therefore, he now made a practice of drinking a very moderately priced wine, which his doctors claimed agreed with his stomach, and at the same time allowed him a goodly saving which he could use to the advantage of others.

On this trip he had found a mother in the steerage with a baby only a few hours old, and the little silver would be as helpful to her as the alcohol injurious to us. Immediately every one in our set began to follow the Colonel's example, and, in the morning between ten and eleven, we would make pilgrimages to the steerage, giving to those in need, though always careful not to offend.

So occupied were we with various interests, the days passed before we could realize it. After dinner some would go in for dancing, others for social chats with the ladies in the salon, but the majority would find their way to a large table in the smoking room, where the Colonel held sway. We had heard of a remarkable thoroughbred mare that he had

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owned, and he had agreed to tell us all about her, from beginning to end.

"Yes," he began, "I intended to have a race horse. I mean a *race* horse, no plater. So at the annual sale, I stepped into the arena of the American Tattersalls, and patiently waited until they led my choice before the auctioneer. She seemed to have filled the eyes of others as well, and a large crowd began to gather around her. I said to myself, 'Old boy, here is plenty of contention,' as I noted among others August Delmountain, the elder; A. J. Assetts, W. W. Blithers, Pierre Barreloflard, and the famous Pitchfork brothers.

"She was too large of barrel to be called good looking, but deep chested and well muscled, with an intelligent head which she carried neither too high nor too low, but in a straightforward, business-like manner that won for her the admiration of all; in fact, she had the remarkable individuality that only runners have, a breeding that no thoroughbred could excel, an eye that would attract anyone and drive a horseman into ecstasies of eagerness and expectation.

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"The auctioneer began: 'You know her sire, the great campaigner "Old Glory," that never met defeat, and her famous dam, "Liberty," that has produced so many sturdy sons and daughters. Come closer and feast your eyes on what is to make some fortunate owner an excellent racer. She needs no extolling; her breeding and looks speak for her. Who will be the first to say ten thousand?'

"Any one of us would readily have given that much for her, but there is a certain amount of finesse required at a sale that takes years of experience to acquire. I realized that I was surrounded by a flock of hawks who could hold their own with any camp of nomadic gypsies in the world. As usual, no one seemed to want her. At last there was an offer of ten thousand, followed by the customary shaking of heads, and it looked as if the auctioneer would have to knock her down, when someone ventured 'eleven.'

"Now was my opportunity, and I shouted 'twenty thousand'! So many walked away that when the required time was about to elapse, I began to think I could have bought her cheaper.

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“ ‘Twenty thousand once, twenty thousand twice, third and last!’

“ ‘Five hundred,’ suddenly piped out a weazen-faced individual, whom I could have strangled on the spot.

“Now warmed up, I yelled, ‘Twenty-five thousand!’ That did it. She was mine, and I was so pleased with my purchase that I helped her future trainer, Beau Jingles, lead her over to my barn.

“I lost the opportunity of winning many valuable stakes by not racing her as a two-year-old, but I did not intend to jeopardize her future by early racing. The pleasure of owning a horse is not in the money it earns, but in seeing it successful in defeating all comers, at all distances, under all conditions.

“Thus could I go on in one continuous strain, talking horse, but I shall make this story as short as possible by telling you that I performed the hat trick with her, in winning the Metropolitan, Brooklyn, and Suburban handicaps, all in the same year. She merely a three-year-old, and the only horse that ever accomplished this feat at any age!

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"She began to attract attention when she won the Metropolitan, and at once became a public favorite. When she won the Brooklyn they went wild, and her return to the judges' stand brought forth round after round of applause. Thousands and thousands rushed to the winner's circle to cheer their idol.

"Then came the unpleasantness which invariably follows in the path of great achievements—whispering remarks of 'impossible'—'something wrong.' Finally Gottlieb Wunbun could restrain himself no longer and said he did not think she had carried her allotted weight. That was all that was needed, as the clerk of scales and myself had been seen talking together, and it was no longer a supposition but a fact. I was too proud to make a statement or a denial. The Suburban was soon to be run and then I should drown forever their vile accusation.

"Through penalties and the handicapper, the filly was asked to carry one hundred and thirty pounds. On the date of the race, so that there could be no doubt of her carrying her full weight, I put up Will Gerdes as jockey. In spite of this handicap, the mare

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literally rolled in, many lengths in front of her field, with Jockey Gerdes standing up in his stirrups and looking back over his shoulders.

“Although I had won enormous sums on her in these races, I now had a desire to make a killing that would make all past winnings seem trifling. I had in mind the Melbourne Cup, well knowing the advantage of keeping my plans unknown if I desired to get long odds against her.

“One night, when all about the race course were asleep, we quietly led the mare out of the barn, to the ship that was to carry us as far as England on our way to Australia.

“How it did rain! Never since the days of Noah had so much water drenched the earth. Every other step we would land in water and mud up to our knees and, when enormous Jockey Gerdes stepped into one of these holes, the water would rise above the curbstones on either side of the street and strike against the houses with such force that the frightened occupants, funny to behold in their night caps, would throw open their windows and anx-

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iously peer out to learn what terrible calamity was visiting them.

“At last! We reached the pier so tired out and bespattered with mud that we were hardly recognizable. It was daylight and we sailed away a short time afterwards on a tiresome trip to Dover. We were fairly comfortable considering we were on a cattle ship. Gerdes was a bit inconvenienced at first, owing to the fact that I had not let him in on my plans and he had not provided himself with extra clothes; but through the offices of the good natured Captain (who weighed no less than two hundred) and artistic tailoring, two pairs of the Captain's trousers were made into one which made the jockey quite comfortable during the remainder of the voyage.

“We were at Dover only long enough to change from one boat to another and steamed away the same afternoon on a turbine steamer for Calais. Much to our disgust, upon arriving at the French port, we learned that we could not get a car suitable for our charge before midnight. I looked after the mare, while I allowed the boys to stroll around the quaint old city, to see the French and their

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mode of living. Fearing some one might recognize Gerdes, I suggested to him on his return to follow the fashion of the country and grow a beard. To this he objected most bitterly, but I persisted and finally he threw his razor away.

“A fast express carried us to Marseilles several days ahead of our schedule. This afforded us an opportunity to run over to Monte Carlo, where I had but little trouble in demonstrating to Gerdes, after he had made several futile attempts to beat the bank, how much costlier was the entrance to hell than heaven.

“At Algiers, I showed him the statue of the little lieutenant, McMahon, and kept him in trim by compelling him to walk up to Mustapha twice a day. In Port Said, he and Jingles were like two small children turned loose in Toyland—they saw so much that was strange and interesting to them. We then took a steamer that was to carry us to our destination. We made one stop only, at Aden, where we picked up a cargo of camels. It was too hot to go ashore and so unpleasant

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even in the harbor that we were all pleased when we weighed anchor and sped away.

"Now, gentlemen, I shall tell you of the most sensational horse race ever known.

"There was nothing startling in our trip to the Flemington race course, unless we may speak of the riot caused by the entrance of Gerdes to the paddock with a jockey's badge.

"The Australians never having heard of America's premier rider nor of my mare, I could wish for no better conditions. After the professional scouts and the runners for the betting ring had sized up my mare and Gerdes' whiskers, the bookmakers began to offer odds of a thousand to one against the Yankee. With a few pounds, I soon quieted such outrageous quotations, though the bystanders jeered each time I took one of them up. In quick succession I stopped all offers of a hundred and of fifty. When they reached twenty to one, I succeeded in getting on a thousand pounds. From then on, as fast as they would offer any odds, I snapped them up and by starting time only a few of the largest bookmakers would offer evens.

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"As the horses paraded to the starting post, I felt sure that the next few minutes would add several years to the bookmakers' lives.

"The start was fair, all being as if in a cluster, but my mare was unfortunate enough to be caught between two slow horses and when the field straightened out she was last.

" 'Look at the Yankee. Ten thousand guineas to a farthing about the Yankee,' jibed the onlookers, and the whole multitude laughed; but, when the mare got clear and passed one after another, the laughter subsided and the cry arose, 'Watch the Yankee, she is gaining! She is third! Second! She is in front and only galloping!' They were now entering the straightaway and she was breezing in front.

"Gentlemen, though I had never been ill a day in my life, I became deathly sick, as my mare faltered. 'She has broken down,' I sighed, and horse after horse passed her.

" 'Broken down? Bosh! Yankee courage. That is her trouble!' railed my neighbor.

"The whole field had left her behind. I felt like a man facing death. My head began

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to swim and I became so dazed that my vision failed me. I rather fell than sank back in my seat, and for a second my consciousness was quite lost. Just when despair was choking me to death, I heard the most glorious sound I had ever heard in all my life. Above the roar of a hundred thousand voices, above the beating of twenty thoroughbreds' hoofs, I heard the music of my mare's.

"Gentlemen, that mare, that marvelous mare, bred in the purple, the mare whom I had named Columbia in honor of the country that bore her, had in the stretch, mind you, stopped, dropped a foal, and had come on and won the Melbourne Cup! And, by blazes! her colt finished second, five lengths in front of the best horses in Australia."

CHAPTER III.

PHARAOH'S GAMING TABLE.

AT THE end of an evening spent at cards, a discussion arose regarding whether the game was called "faro" or "pharaoh" bank. As usual, Colonel Rockinghorse was called upon to decide the argument. Not only did we get the answer to our question, but we heard, also, a most remarkable story in connection with the subject.

"During my travels in Egypt," related the Colonel, "I met an Egyptian named Hi Ero-glyph. He was certainly a relic of the past, having outlived dynasty after dynasty of kings. He told me of the time, centuries ago, when he had played against Pharaoh. This is the story just as he told it to me:

"THE STORY OF HI EROGLYPH, THE EGYPTIAN.

"King Necho was a man of great learning, having taken his degrees at the sacred temple of the white robed priests. Like his

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forefathers and their predecessors, the Ramesses, he had made a special study of tortures, and he whiled away his leisure moments inflicting cruelties upon others. He was always amused at one in pain and he saw to it personally that he had plenty of amusement. He enjoyed so much the twitches a victim made when flagellated that he often had the operation repeated. Still he derived more solid comfort in refusing a loan to a poor unfortunate who had lost his all at one of his gaming tables than he did in his other sports and pastimes.

“ ‘I remember that he had certain court favorites keep tab on those who had accumulated sufficient money to be worth while, and they were asked to the royal table. After dinner, the lay-out was spread and they were invited to play.

“ ‘I can still see that rancorous vulture sitting in what was known as the look-out chair, his hawk-like eyes so keen and alert that nothing escaped them. Often have I seen him slyly nudge the dealer to rake in a winning bet that some player in his excitement had neglected to take down. And for as many

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years as he ruled, he was never known to overlook a losing bet nor overpay anyone.

“ ‘A certain cross-eyed Arab who risked but little, invariably cashed in a huge stack of chips. He went to the well once too often and the Eliminating Angel of Egypt clipped him behind the ears and he was no more. A warning was sent out that severe punishment would be meted out to any one caught “tipping the stacks,” that is, stealing chips off the stacks of others by means of a suction device concealed in the palm of the hand.

“ ‘Though Pharaoh kept the whole kingdom in straitened circumstances his greed was not satisfied and when a Greek, Kirie Roulette, came along with a device for increasing the bank's percentage, his apparatus was installed at once. Ignorant of his new advantage, we continued to play and continued to lose.

“ ‘Mohammed Squealer, who had been losing steadily and heavily, finally let out a squawk that he did not think the game was on the level. The King was on his feet in a jiffy. “Squealer,” said he, “you are fallow and bilious-looking; surely you are not well.

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Dr. Croaker, have the guards carry him to the river Nile and open his bowels with the royal boat hook."

" 'About the time that I had lost my all and was borrowing from everyone, I discovered that those who would be contented with winning small bets could always do so simply by playing opposite the large ones. Thus I was slowly recovering my losses when suddenly I glanced toward Pharaoh. I was not unobserved, for he was looking directly at me with the same look that sent poor Squealer to his doom; a look that spoke wonders and told me to change my system or take a farewell look at the pictures.

" 'For the first time in many years I kept away from the gaming room and found no little enjoyment with the fair sex. We passed many pleasant hours lolling among the silken stuffs of the temple and rejoicing to our hearts' content in the scandal of the temple, such as the story of how the Queen boxed the Princess's ears in the presence of all the royal servants, when she caught her in the arms of Rasputin, an attendant of the bath, one whom the Queen had chosen for her very own.

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“ ‘One morning, while hastening to that part of the temple where I had an apartment, I was surprised to see a man sneaking into the club room, taking every precaution not to be observed. I recognized him as Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, and I had such a high regard for him that I thought anything this genius was about to do would be worth watching. I saw him go directly to the table, and, to my surprise, pull out a network of wires which he clipped into small bits and put in his pockets. Next he got the cards and worked most industriously on them for a short time, then hastily put them back in the box, then quickly and noiselessly passed by me as I stood hidden behind the curtain.

“ ‘I could hardly wait until the opening when I could follow this foreigner and play everything he did. Instead of the doors being opened at the usual hour a notice was posted that the Club was closed for the evening.

“ ‘The King was in a terrible frame of mind. It was dangerous for anyone to go near him, so I took a walk out to Gizeh, thinking I might find Carlos de Loieville,

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from whom I could always get the loan of a few pieces of silver.

“ ‘I must take this opportunity to state that this same Carlos was the most efficient pharaoh-bank dealer known, yet he was so poorly paid that he was forced to resort to other means to make both ends meet. He knew the King’s weakness for dancing and, when the money drawer was bulging with coarse notes, he would give a signal to the leader of the band whose very touch of his instrument sent a thrill through one’s body from top to toe, and on these occasions would play a very popular ditty of those days, entitled “Turkey in the Straw.”

“ ‘At once there would begin a swaying, humming and shaking of feet, and the whole royal guard could not restrain his Highness from jumping over the lay-out and jigging. This afforded Carlos such an excellent opportunity for annexing several of the larger bills, that he soon became a man of means and affluence, and those who had originally snubbed him now arose at his approach and stood with uncovered heads.

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“ ‘While I did not find Carlos, I met Nebuchadnezzar. He inquired if I had ever known a man by the name of Roulette, at the same time showing me an advertisement in the “Evening Goat Skin” in which the King was offering a substantial reward for information as to his whereabouts. I told him I knew Roulette and my description pleased him so that he chuckled aloud and he informed me that he also knew the man, but not by that name, and that Necho would not be able to reach him, as he had the gentleman safely confined in a tower in his land, working out the plans of a new game of hazard to be called the “bird cage.”’

“ ‘Now the King would have to open his club and deal on the square, as no other man in the world knew how to install the “high lay out” but this same Roulette.

“ ‘Neb and myself became very intimate, and he confided in me that he was a king in his own country and had taken under his wing the guidance of several other nations. One of these had taught him how to make money and multiply it, and had told him how a

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nephew had tricked his uncle out of certain lambs and had been blessed.

“ ‘Catching his drift, I broke in and apprised him of having seen him in the club room and offered my assistance providing I was to share in the spoils. He agreed and explained to me that he had removed the necessary mechanism to the “high lay out” and had put in what was known, in the parlance of the Greeks, as the “tell,” and all that was necessary for me to do would be to follow his play and bet the limit each time.

“ ‘That night, the yelps of the tiger could be heard on either bank of the Nile from its source to its mouth as we unmercifully twisted the tail of the beast. As a climax, when Pharaoh was nearly mad with rage, there was heard the clashing of steel and the beating of drums, and Nebuchadnezzar at the head of his own army struck at Necho and put him asunder.’

“Then,” continued Colonel Rockinghorse, “I asked the Egyptian to tell me more of gambling and the best way to abolish it.

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“He said that gambling was so firmly allied with business that the two had become interwoven and not even such capable scholars as the ancient Greeks had been able to point out where one began or the other ended. So long as we continue to transact business, gambling will exist in some form or other. It has its advantages, in so much as it shows up man in his true colors. It is here we learn that the man who complains, has nothing to complain about, and another would be basking in fortune’s smiles if given the same opportunity.

“He said that he had known gamblers who were men of their word and liberal to a fault; they would live up to an agreement no matter how disadvantageous and give to all charities even to the straining of their purse. Still, the professional gambler who does nothing but gamble for a living, thriving on the produce of others without producing anything himself, is a detriment to any community unfortunate enough to harbor him.

“He was about to leave when I stopped him with another question. I inquired if life was not monotonous to him, having lived so long. He replied, that as he grew older and

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reviewed his past life, he found all a mistake; his vast experiences had taught him nothing but that he had always erred; that now he was leading a different life and desired to live not only to blot out the past, but to be good and do good in such a manner as to reach and benefit those who would ignore his endeavors in any other form. He did not wish me to believe that he was afraid to die, as he was satisfied that his soul without bodily form lived apart from all that was corporeal, and that it merely used this composition of salts and water, called man, to express its thoughts.

“ ‘One can build a house,’ he said, ‘and in my day I have seen many crumble away, but once create a thought, and it will live forever. I beg of you to not even think of evil.’

“I asked him if he believed in God. The manner in which he looked at me showed his disappointment. He half mumbled to himself, ‘What can be expected of a people who stood idly by, seeing a great man weep and die for them, and looked askance?’ Then he spoke aloud: ‘One afternoon when I stood on top of the large pyramid marveling

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at the sphinx and the tall obelisks in the distance, I was startled by a voice, like distant singing, saying, "For without me you can do nothing." On looking below I saw a man surrounded by a multitude loudly proclaiming that to him was due the credit of the discovery. I at once looked above, and caught the sun winking at the moon, and the moon winking back (*Nihil est sub sole novum*).

"'You have among you clever architects who can draw the plans and skilled workmen who can build the temples, yet their combined powers cannot construct a simple little flower or aught else that breathes and grows. How can a man who knows that the proof of a thing is in itself and has sense enough to know that he has not created himself, be ignorant enough to ask if there is a God?'

"He turned as if to walk away, but stopped and again looked at me in a most pitying but solemn manner. 'Look up at the sky,' he said, 'you are underneath a huge ball of fire that controls this earth and other planets and if your eyes were as mine, you would see in the distance millions of suns that control billions of planets; that, compared to

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these, not only you but the earth you live on and the sun above you, is as a grain of salt. Stop and consider how small you are and what greatness you assume in asking such a question, and do not become awe-stricken at this immensity, as I say unto you that two non-entities, space and emptiness, are not only larger but are of sterner stuff.

“ ‘My dear sir,’ he continued slowly, ‘the human eye cannot discern anything that really exists. What is, has been and always shall be. From nothing can anything arise, to nothing can anything recede. These wonderful works that many of you attribute to Nature and not to God, will disappear at the snuffing out of the candle; they never were and never shall be.’—I was surrounded by symbolical figures and picture writings, but Hi Eroglyph had disappeared.”

CHAPTER IV.

AN ENTERTAINMENT ON SHIPBOARD.

WE DECIDED to request a gentleman whose name appeared on the passenger list as the Right Honorable Charles E. Titmouse to open the entertainment for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the seamen and sailors with a short address. Colonel Rockinghorse, we agreed, was just the man to make this request. Imagine our surprise when the usually even tempered Colonel returned from his mission, boiling with rage.

“The very honorable gentleman you sent me to interview,” exploded Rockinghorse, hadn’t time to spare and referred me to his secretary. While I was too busy to find his secretary, I found time to express myself about one who had used collusive means to gain his end and despicable enough to seek shelter beneath the cloak of sanctification.

“The Lord abhors a deceitful man and the Goddess of Fortune must be stone blind to waste her laurels on such an one. I suppose it

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has puzzled others as well as myself how anyone in humanity's garb could vote for a stubborn, melancholy, thankless egotist, who has never succeeded in accomplishing anything while in office but what he has tried to avoid.

"I agree with Poe that a reformist instead of being a demi-god is a devil turned inside out; and I told him that, when one became so important that he had no time for others, others had always made it their business to find another who had more leisure."

The exasperated old man, who had never stopped talking long enough to take his breath, dropped into a chair utterly exhausted.

Some time after this occurrence, this same man whom many thought shelved for good, broke into the limelight and ran for a great and important office; but, probably on account of his self-importance, he was beaten by an avalanche of opposing votes. He so forgot himself when conclusive proof of his defeat was broken to him that he shattered the telephone receiver against the wall and bitterly cursed those around him.

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We had arranged a series of characters to represent their individual states, and the curtain arose upon an artistically set scene where two tourists were climbing one of California's picturesque mountains. Suddenly a deep rumbling came from the mountains, resolving itself into these words:

"I, the keeper of the Golden Gate, know you to be strangers and I demand in the name of the mighty order of the N. S., your intentions. I have been told my vegetation has no taste, my flowers no fragrance, my women no virtue, my men no honor, and that I am three thousand miles from Broadway! Why do you come to this detestable spot, where Spring met Autumn, and Autumn met Spring, and they settled down and made it their home?"

This scene elicited great applause from the enthusiastic Californians present.

Next came the Colonel with a rousing eulogy of his own Kentucky.

"The men of Kentucky trace their ancestry back to the times before the English were a nation and their learning to the gods. From early youth, they consume an elixir dis-

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tilled from corn which makes them stalwart and strong and has nourished such men as Lincoln, Clay and Breckenridge. I must say, however, that I love and respect a real man, whether his birthplace be in the highlands of Kentucky or the wilds of Patagonia.

“Kentucky’s great and only vice is vanity. She is proud of her verdant rolling hills; proud of her thoroughbred horses; proud of her beautiful women; proud of the bold and courageous men who first settled her hunting grounds. They feared no danger and bowed to no obstacles. Among them there was not one drone nor one of a calibre of which any country could not be proud.”

After almost every State had been represented, the entertainment was brought to an end by a gentleman from Indiana who admitted there was nothing he could say in favor of his State.

We kept the audience in their seats for an auction pool of twenty numbers on the run of the steamer. A Mr. William Prime acted as auctioneer and he proved both proficient and entertaining. He succeeded in getting

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much more for many of the numbers than they were worth, and even shamed Titmouse into buying one.

Juan Palmetto had just equipped Dr. Chef's lunar expedition. While he had no doubt that the doctor would reach the moon, what worried Juan was, would the public believe it? He anxiously bought a number for luck.

Si Comslow, a man of sixty whose youthful appearance was attributed by others to the use of a nepenthe distilled from poppy leaves, had floated into wealth on the good ship Petticoat. He bought a number and gave the cashier an order on his wife for the money.

Col. George Frog was one of those men who when successful forget their friends, but when they meet adversity run back for favors from those whom they have treated with arrogance. Colonel Frog bought a number and was so elated with its possibilities that no one could talk to him. When he found he had lost, however, he was looking on all sides for sympathy.

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A great enthusiast was Colonel James, whose eloquence had fascinated many, and he had never allowed money to fascinate him. This gentleman, having been a frequent visitor at the races, had become skilled in the art of handicapping. He sought the log book of the steamer's previous runs and dug into the works of Euclid, books of calculus, and those of the Arabian chemist Geber, from whom Algebra derived its name.

Finally, he came to the remarkable conclusion that, as one good turn deserves another, with favorable weather and no engine trouble the steamer passing through the same latitude and longitude should make the same run as she had made on her previous trip. The wily auctioneer got wind of the result of his calculations and made James pay the record price. When poor James's number proved the worst of the lot his disgust knew no bounds and he let out a bellow that was likened unto the braying of ten thousand asses.

In his excitement, he admitted he had been greatly influenced by the barber whom he now denounced in no mild terms. It was not so

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much the loss of money that disturbed him as his poor handicapping.

This gentleman was one of the very few public officials whom I have known that never had midnight visitors nor occasions to step aside and whisper, though the bombarding of Verdun would be a lulling sound alongside his nearest approach to a whisper. The fact was, however, that he never had business that could not be transacted in the open and in the ear-shot of all.

Fenzy Cahners bought the low field and in a sudden fit of philanthropic liberality he sought out the ship's engineer and offered him half the pool if the low field should win. When it failed to win, he called the engineer a scoundrel and threatened to have him discharged for his reckless driving of the engine.

Mr. ——— of Boston won the pool and quietly donated the entire purse of \$8,200 to charities. The stewards and others who crossed the ocean frequently stated this to be the record pool.

As a finale, a prize was to be given away to the winner of a bridge tournament, but

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this plan went astray. Miss Playfair, who was official scorekeeper, had been leading by what seemed to be a safe margin but, towards the end, Miss Matilda Goodsoul, a shockingly poor player but possessed of remarkable ability of holding aces and kings, suddenly overcame the lead and the score was lost overboard—an accident which brought forth many apologies from Miss Playfair. She said that although she had undoubtedly won, she could not think of accepting the prize without the evidence, and the only thing to do was to play over again or to call it off. The latter course was unanimously agreed upon amid uncontrollable sighs of relief.

Then the band played "God Save the King," and the majority stood up and sang "My Country, 'Tis of Thee."

CHAPTER V.

THE COLONEL'S ROMANTIC ESCAPADE.

LATE one night, I discovered the fascinating Colonel surreptitiously sneaking from his cabin to that of a very charming widow. I admit what I did was not very chivalrous but I told my friends, who at once agreed to have some sport at the expense of the pair. Naturally we feared nothing from the Colonel as we knew he would be willing to bear the brunt of a joke. On account of the lady in the case, however, we decided to be very cautious. Of course we knew there was nothing dishonorable in their meetings, simply a case of timorous bashfulness causing them to seek each other's company at an hour when they were least likely to be observed.

The next night we waited until the gentleman was making his nocturnal visit, then we stretched a wire outside of the door at the height of one's ankles, and clipped the electric light wires that led into the cabin. We then stood beneath a small aperture for ven-

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tilating purposes, and listened to the following:

"If you, fair lady, had lived in the days of chivalry, you would have changed the whole world's history. There was no Venus until now. Never before was skin so soft, form so perfect and true. Every flower straightens up, and the buds burst their bindings to get a better view, as they all pay homage to you, who was never designed for mortal man. Yet I, who am held tight in the vise of old age, have the boldness to hope that some day you will be mine."

"No more of that, Colonel dear, you are just in your prime, and like Othello, need only to tell a lady the story of your life, to win her heart."

"Madame, when I become so old that I have to resort to a lying tongue to win my way to a lady's heart, I shall wear a drivelling bib and resign myself to senility."

"Chide me not, Monteith dear, as my heart can wait no longer, and demands that I follow you through life's trials to the end."

THE COLONEL'S ROMANTIC ESCAPE

I had secured two cats, a dog and a parrot, all tied on a string a short distance apart, and I now held them ready. As the Colonel gently fondled and caressed his lady-love and just as she gave him permission to kiss her and thanked the stars that darkness shielded the blushes of a soon-to-be bride, I dropped the small menagerie through the opening, all in a heap, on the Colonel. Instantly the cats began to scratch, the dog to bark and snap, and the parrot to screech. The Colonel, at the top of his voice, ordered the lights to be turned on, at the same time trying to free himself of his enemies and groping in the dark to find the door.

In the meantime a cat got beneath one of the Colonel's arms, the dog under the other, the parrot on top of his head, jeering at him, and the other cat clawing into his back.

"But turn on the light and allow me to get my hands on him and I shall drown your lover in his own blood!" roared Rockinghorse.

"Pray, what is it? How did two of you get in here? I beg of you, gentlemen, consider my honor," anxiously pleaded the lady.

THE COLONEL'S ROMANTIC ESCAPADE

"Cowards have been known to fight, but, as brave as I am, I am not brave enough to run away. So here, Madame, I make my stand, even though it shatters the reputation of all the ladies in the land. Turn, assassin, turn!" cried he, "and meet me face to face. A demon of a thousand heads is not too much for me. Ouch! Madame, I think you have entered into a compact with the devil, to have enticed me here. Ouch! Ouch! Oh! Oh! Open the door! There never lived man more valiant, ouch! than I, but this biting and gnawing from behind is too much. Ouch! Mercy! I cry." At this moment, finding the door, he burst it open and rushed forth with a force so strong that when his legs struck the wire he was thrown, still entangled with the animals, many feet down the corridor.

Between the Colonel's howls of pain and the widow's cries of fright they had brought many of the passengers to their cabin doors. I at once found the switch and turned off all the electric lights before any one could be recognized, but not before Mr. Toby Tompkins, a Harlemite, who had often been awakened by cats, still half asleep, opened his door

THE COLONEL'S ROMANTIC ESCAPADE

and let fly his bootjack, striking the Colonel on his pate with a thud, leaving a bump which reminded him of the incident for several days later.

I have taken the liberty of telling this little escapade not so much to amuse as to fulfill the wishes of the Colonel, as I heard him say, "If a man is worth being written about he is worth the truth." So do not extenuate or pass hurriedly over his faults, but rather extenuate and study them, so if there should be anyone who thought enough of him to attempt to follow in his footsteps he may know all his faults and profit by them.

CHAPTER VI.

MORE ABOUT COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE.

I WISH some wonderful artist could have painted the picture which I beheld on the ship's deck one day. There sat the Colonel in the midst of a bevy of children, his beaming face looking over the little ones as they climbed on his knees, clung to his arms and shoulders and sat at his feet. The old gentleman never seemed so happy as when telling them stories of Brier Rabbit, fairies, kings, princes and princesses, or of the knights of the older days.

Apparently he had no purpose in life but to give pleasure to others, for after we had arrived in London I have often seen him sacrifice something to the poor. It seemed impossible for him to enjoy luxurious comfort while others were in want, and he never lost an opportunity to benefit his fellow man, yet he believed in rigid enforcement of justice, and caused the arrest of a coarse, burly man for begging whom he knew to be able to earn

MORE ABOUT COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE

his living. Remarking that he could not tolerate a healthy brute feigning sickness to encroach upon the privileges of the genuinely helpless; for not only do such undesirables take what should go to others, but they furnish an excuse to the selfish who, to justify themselves, point to such instances of alms finding their way to the undeserving.

Probably Colonel Rockinghorse's most striking characteristic was his habit of expressing at every opportunity his homely but sound philosophy in a manner which was singular, to say the least.

I still remember a few of these sayings:

Until the realization of God, you are "it" at "blind man's buff."

Never play at "tag" when your shoulders are sunburned, nor ever find fault with another for doing what you yourself would probably do.

When fool meets fool, they fool each other; but when knave meets knave, the game is blocked.

MORE ABOUT COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE

Flattery is the bait used by the knave, and wise is the man who can unhesitatingly pass this tempting morsel.

Men who thrive by their wits reject an honest victim. It is absolutely necessary for them to find a creature who has no scruples against taking advantage of his fellow man. When such an one is found, the artful trickster entices with a show of an enormous return, a never-to-come-to-light, and a sure get-away; then the gullible one steps in and invariably finds himself in that predicament in which he had expected to put another.

I admit the luscious juice may be extracted from any simpleton, but the full-fledged, blubbery booby called the "sucker," chucked full of the fluid and larceny, voluntarily places himself on the altar and assists in the ceremony.

Victims of green goods, wire tapping, and similar swindling games, are ones who have entered into agreements to defraud their fellow men. Had they lived up to the Golden Rule, their consciences would be easier and their pockets fuller.

MORE ABOUT COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE

Turn the damper on your passion before you are scorched by its heat.

Do not waste your time on impossibilities, but never allow failures to discourage you, for among the most successful are some that have made many failures. If you have really tried today, you have planted a seed that will sprout tomorrow. Do not forget that one accomplishment only paves the way for a greater accomplishment. Your work is never finished, so long as you are sound of body and mind.

Envy is a cancer that finally destroys the life it feeds upon.

The "good fellow" gained the sobriquet at the expense of his own family, and is merely serving himself as a choice pudding. When the platter is cleaned, he will be left to his own meditation.

Give to the poor liberally, but purchase the respect and friendship of all through your manhood.

It is not necessary to say that one is "a brave and bold man." The fact that he is a

MORE ABOUT COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE

man denotes these things, and a person that does not possess these qualifications, while he may be called a gentleman, is no man.

Knowledge is the only priceless thing that does not require a safety deposit. It is the most faithful of friends and is a bargain at any price. The more freedom you give it, the safer and better.

Do not go broke borrowing, but enrich yourself extending favors.

An honest pacifist takes up arms and banishes the intruder that threatens his peace and liberty. That creature who will not fight for these rights is not a pacifist, but a coward who shirks his duty and denies an obligation he owes to humanity, and he does not nor shall he ever enjoy peace.

Remember that no matter how narrow the passage, or how deep the pit, or how thick the walls, you are not alone.

My eyes have been known to deceive me, my ears have misunderstood, but I have such control over my tongue that I swear by it at all times.

MORE ABOUT COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE

Destroy evil by feasting your eyes only on that which is good, as evil requires so much attention that neglect will soon cause it to shrivel up.

Each rising sun ushers forth a new day, overflowing with golden opportunities; be one of the first at the distribution of the plums.

CHAPTER VII.

A LETTER FROM A VISITER TO OUR PLANET.

WE WERE sitting in the smoking room one evening, having a social chat, when Colonel Rockinghorse entered the room.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “here is a letter that substantiates Hi Erogyph in many ways.” He then proceeded to read this remarkable document:

“‘To the people who inhabit the planet Oblivion, by them called the Earth, or to anyone it may concern:

“‘My dear friends:

“‘My name is Jeremiah Comet, Jr., only son of Jeremiah Comet, Sr., known to every inhabitant of a million planets as Jeremiah, the Great, inventor of the comet which bears our family name, and the originator and proprietor of the Comet Line of Jitneys.

“‘In certain sections, business had become so dull that father was thinking of dropping

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some of the stations from our route. As we were nearing this planet, he called me to his side. "Jerry, my boy," said he, "I have been looking over my books and find that Oblivion has given us but few passengers. It is fully stocked with people, whose knowledge is so limited that they are satisfied with earthly things and know nothing of the many attractions we can offer them at our various inter-planetary stopping places.

" " "Jeremiah," continued he, "you are fifty thousand years old. I have spent a fortune on your education, and you have travelled more than any young man living. I think it is about time for you to bear fruit. Stop off at this planet until I return. Point out to the inhabitants our advantages. Let them know our attractions are manifold; and at the same time impress upon them that if business does not pick up, they will be dropped from our route."

" "I alighted at Broadway and 42nd Street, in the City of New York, and although I was a stranger, instead of being received in a courteous manner, I was compelled to use all my physical strength to protect myself. I was

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shoved one way, then another, and not once did any one offer an apology; nor could I find one who would listen, much less answer a question. I at once discovered that you worship the wicked little dancing demon and live solely to obey him; and instead of your brains catering to your heart, they give their entire attention to your feet.

“ ‘After mastering the language of this section of your planet, I decided the only way you could be reached was through the pen.

“ ‘While life may not be so serious as a few of you try to make it, you must realize it is for some purpose inasmuch as you have brains and qualities superior to the ass, which were not given to you merely to find your way to the feed box and watering trough. You were given power over your senses, but you are so weak that you allow them to dominate over you.

“ ‘You are full of good resolutions which you will never keep. You are so afraid of the truth that you deny what you have done, and claim to have done what you have not. You agree to do that which you have no in-

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tention of doing, and agree not to do what you fully intend to do.

“ ‘These things are beyond me, as I can not imagine how any one could prefer lying to having others know the truth. The truth is the truth. It needs no shaping. There are no corners or rough edges to be taken off, in fact, it is so delicate and refined that the least tampering will break it.

“ ‘Unity is the secret of advancement in other planets. You never hear anyone say, “I did it,” or “that is mine.” It is always, “We did it,” or “That is ours.” No one desires to achieve success over his neighbor nor to neglect him during his sorrow.

“ “ ‘Cleanliness is next to godliness” there, as well as here. As our streets are cleaned, clean yours. I am told yours are flooded every night, but I find them dirty during the day. As often as they become dirty, so often should they be cleaned. While you are at it, sweep out calumny, spite, avarice, and others of their ilk, that are hanging about.

“ ‘The fact that some of you, like the beaver, prefer work to any other form of

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amusement, is no reason why others should not have a fair part of the day to enjoy themselves in a manner pleasing to them. Though many of us are a hundred thousand years old, or more, each day seems shorter than the one before.

“ ‘As sure as cowardice is one of the tributaries of ignorance, courage is one of the tributaries of knowledge. Therefore, through your intellect, be brave enough to overcome sensual desires of youth, and become men free from its stains.

“ ‘Have you ever stopped to ask yourself the question, “Why am I here?” “Why has man been placed in a new world, absolutely pure and clean, and been allowed to turn it topsy turvy, driving out good and introducing evil?” Did it ever occur to you that you may stay here until you are worthy of a better place? The school boy who fails in his lessons today, must try again tomorrow; and if you do not fulfill certain requirements this time, you may have to try once again.

“ ‘How disappointed must Oblivion be in itself, to have been equipped with so many

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clear running streams, beautiful valleys and dales, green timber-covered mountains, and a rich plenty producing soil, merely to feed and fatten the parasitic fungi.

“ ‘Imagine that you were my father, and had visited many planets bordering on perfection, and as you sat in the pilot house of the Comet, looking down on the earth, you saw the people backing vice with all their might and power, as she bleeds decency white; all practicing deceit; the strong oppressing the weak; the rich the poor; and committing multitudinous errors; wrapped in malice, envy and covetousness. Very few of you would show the consideration that my father has. You would turn your heads in disgust and hurriedly drive away from these abominations and a people content in their own ignorance. You are too cowardly to tell the truth to men; yet brave enough to lie in the presence of God.

“ ‘Your morals were better at one time, but you have gone from good to bad, and from bad to worse.

“ ‘What you should desire and look forward to, is a state of perpetual happiness. I

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have no desire to make you dissatisfied with your present abode by telling you of a better one; I simply wish to impress upon you that you can improve the conditions here, as we have in Veracity. You actually fear death, while we consider natural death as much of a blessing as birth. In truth we know it is a birth. You have only to overcome your antagonistic disposition to develop more quickly.

“ ‘You do not seem to realize what we learned centuries ago, that to be other than just was to our own disadvantage. Do not think honor is destitute because your dim eyes cannot fathom its riches. Be not too ambitious, as ambition to honor is as the boa constrictor to its prey. But keep yourself occupied, as Satan has such contempt for the industrious that he ignores them. By avoiding bad, you will meet good. I once heard of a man who jumped aside to avoid hell and found himself in heaven.

“ ‘In you I have found a strange people, indeed; although you know right from wrong, you continue to grope in the dark. On all sides there is nothing but confusion and con-

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tention. You are so inconsistent that what you today consider to be a fact, tomorrow you will doubt. You are like lint in the air; you go whichever way the wind blows. You jump through the first loop-hole that offers itself. Because I am here today, do not say, "Well, I suppose he is right," but compare what I say with what someone said yesterday, and what another will say tomorrow. If you have riches, give. If you have brains, think. Either is beneficial. Your whole life has been one of deceit, yet you have deceived no one but yourselves.

" 'You were given Good, but grew tired of it, messed it about, and finally flung it aside for Evil. You dressed up your new plaything in all the gay colors of its depravities, and gloried in it, but when you were pained by its sting, you could not throw it aside as easily as you had Good.

" 'I find that you favor justice, unless injustice is to your advantage. You will give, so long as you do not miss what you give; and look to all sides for commendation. Why, even the highwayman will give his old clothes to some one in need. The meanest

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criminal in the world, providing he is not in a hurry, will fetch a glass of water to one dying of thirst. True charity is parting with something you will miss.

“ ‘You only take that stand which conforms with your selfish motives. A woman in the same building where I am lodging had for thirty years lived with her husband, and had no fault to find with him, but when he had lost all his money she suddenly discovered him to be a tyrant and divorced him. You require nothing of yourselves, but expect much of others.

“ ‘While you can prove nothing, you are egotistical enough to think you know all. You have been given an opportunity to play at living, and you do not know how to take advantage of it; you are as helpless as a parvenu making his first appearance in a drawing room.

“ ‘The desire to excel, retards. You must work together, and as for one of you attempting to steal a march on your neighbor is the same as digging a ditch in your own path. God loves team work, and in Veracity they

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advance together, shoulder to shoulder, stride and stride alike. They pick up those who have fallen by the wayside, no matter what their condition, nor how deep in the gutter they may lie, for they are essential parts, and when all the parts are collected together they will form a solid V whose rush to heaven nothing can block.

“ ‘Not only have you figured out the origin of the world, but you speak of its predestined future, saying that just as the consolidation of gases, molecules, etc., formed the planets, so there would be a final consolidation of all Planets into one large Sphere. I can give you an idea of the enormity of such a sphere by giving you the report of a pilot who had quite a long ride on a runaway comet.

“ ‘The comet began to skid at a point near the center of the bowl of the great dipper, and finally darted off in a straight line towards what we term the “huge Nebulae.” The pilot was almost helpless, only being able to guide his comet the least bit to the right or left to avoid collisions. He was gone ten thousand years before he gained sufficient control to enable him to return with her. At no time

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was the speed less than a thousand miles a second, nor was there any diminishing of the planets which were on her right and left, in front and behind, and above and below her. So we generally agreed among ourselves that if the comet had doubled her speed, and had been gone for a million years, yea, a hundred millions or more, it would have been the same.

“ ‘I understand how you can make one mass out of a known number of balls, but how can you make one ball out of a limitless number of balls which have no starting nor ending? This is beyond us, and we reckon in myriads, whereas you reckon in units.

“ ‘We have decided that infinity and eternity are far beyond our conception and no concern of ours. If we succeed in doing what is right and abstain from doing what is wrong, we are doing God’s will, and I think that should suffice you also. Let your philosophers first find God, then they will have succeeded in finding the truth. Instead of being in a strange land, they will find themselves at home. And the pilot said, “Through all the

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vast space I felt, as I do here, the presence of God, omnipotent, omnipresent, all in all."

" 'At home, I have heard them speak of war, but during the fifty thousand years I have lived, and the thousand of planets I have visited, I have never seen a war. I have always thought war was legendary, but here on the planet of Oblivion I find it a reality. Even as I write, I hear the loud blasts of the trumpets, calling more to arms, more to the front, more to swell the river of blood, more to the stockyards of Europe to help squelch the ambitious spleen of the barbaric potentate of the Huns.

" 'I see the foes facing each other, knee deep in blood. Their bodies are lacerated, and their heads battered, and the loss of blood from their open wounds almost throws them into each other's arms at every lunge. Still they fight, still the hacking and hewing continues, reeling and stumbling over the slain like monstrous beasts. They are depopulating the world, and paying homage to that merchant in flesh and blood, "The God of War," whose instruments make equal the

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wise and the fool, dragging civilization back to the barbaric days of long ago.

“ ‘Of what flimsy texture is the covering of man’s brain composed, that it admits such thoughts as those of war? Let the beasts gore one another, and the elements battle in their continual strife,—man is for a different purpose.

“ ‘The very old and learned men of Veracity say, however, that since the unprepared are merely targets for the enemy, the best and only way to assure peace is to build up your navy, strengthen and extend your fortifications, and be in a state of perpetual preparedness. Thus, by equipping the dove with the beak and claws of the eagle, keep the bird of prey away. The only war justifiable is one to suppress tyranny—never one for conquest.

“ ‘Are you always going to be like the barnacle and cling to matter, rendering abortive my mission? Even the caterpillar longs for the time when it can spread its wings and soar. Our requirements are quite simple for the worker; they only seem drastic to the drone. It is only necessary to try, to qualify

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for a ride, and the seating capacity on the comet is sufficiently large for the entire population of the Earth. Do you care so little for liberty that you are willing to lie forever enslaved to gravity?

“ ‘Is it possible for you to picture the joy of my father, if on his return I could say, “Make room for the people of the Earth, for they are with me?” How bounteous would be his blessings. With what pride he would look upon his son, as he would open wide his arms to welcome the long-sought-for passengers.

“ ‘There is a higher order of things than I can explain or demonstrate, and untold riches awaiting you. But my father warns you that it is generally understood that anyone who expects a reward for doing what is right, could probably for a consideration be induced to do what is wrong. A man who justifies a fraud would, in all probability, commit one. Such persons are not wanted.

“ ‘There was a time when we were as blind as you, and I am not a Seer nor a Swedenborg, but a plain, simple man, possessing only



“SHOT UP THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT”

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that amount of knowledge which enables me to realize the great advantage of a planet of equality and happiness. It would be absurd, indeed, for me to claim aught but what my conduct would bear out. Individually, I have accomplished little, but I am a member of a huge congenial body that has accomplished wonders, simply by being on the level. I beg of you to benefit by the experience of Veracity, for she was in your condition, but she now ranks as far above you as the difference of the squares between you. Yet she longs for you, and stretches out her hand to welcome you, as she herself is welcomed by the planet of Perfection.'

"Here," said Colonel Rockinghorse, "this unusual letter comes to an end, and the following is attached to it:

"'NOTE.—The undersigned was employed by Mr. Comet as a man servant. My master subsisted on vapors, and his sudden and unexpected departure was caused by partaking too ravenously of gaseous corpuscles that ascended from a suffragettes' meeting which was being held directly below our lodgings. He was so interested in his writings that he

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did not discover his predicament until he began to rise. He called upon me to hold him down, as he tried to relieve himself of the inflation. This he found impossible, and each second found him lighter and more difficult to control. I thought if I could reach and close the window I might shut off his supply, and in attempting to do so I slackened my hold on him just a little. He immediately tore loose from me and, like a rocket, shot up through the skylight.

“ ‘This I solemnly swear to be the truth.

(Signed) “ ‘NEWTON GRAVITY.’ ”



Riley ————— 70

“COUNT HIROSAKA HAD NO LIKING
FOR THE COLONEL.”

CHAPTER VIII.

AN AWFUL DREAM.

COLONEL ROCKINGHORSE seemed to dislike Count Hirosaka, who for his part had no liking for the Colonel. The smoking room was divided into two sets, one headed by the Colonel, which spent most of its time in drinking, the other by the Count, which spent its time in gambling. Livingston had chosen the side of the latter. His losses had amounted to a considerable sum, the enormity of which suggested that all might not have been fair. I thought he should have been put on his guard, and declared to the Colonel my intention of doing so. I was immediately told of a certain Mr. Stonefellow, who had accumulated a colossal fortune and who attributed his wealth to his habit of minding his own business.

Nevertheless, the next day, when I again heard of Livingston having made another heavy loss, I called the Count aside and begged him to use his influence to keep Liv-

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ingston from playing this the last night aboard. He was pleased that I should take such an interest in one of his followers, and promised to do what he could.

After dinner while I was seated at a table next to them, I overheard the Count tell Livingston not to worry about his losses; that he himself was wealthy, and to seal their friendship he forced on Livingston a roll of bills that doubled the amount of his losses, at the same time asking him not to play any more.

The Count motioned me to join them, and as I took my seat at their table, I noticed with concern the changes that had come over Livingston. At the beginning of the voyage, without the least hesitation, I should have voted him the best looking man aboard; now he was haggard and sallow, with deep, black circles beneath his eyes. His hand shook so that he could not carry a glass to his lips without spilling half the contents. As the poor fellow leaned on his elbows and buried his face in his hands, the Count whispered to me, "We must watch him closely, his mind is in that state which drives one to distraction, perhaps suicide."

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Unfortunately, Livingston overheard him. "What!" cried he. "What manner of beast do you think I am, that such a thought would enter my head? No, gentlemen, I am not worried over my losses, but I have had such a dreadful warning in the shape of a horrible, terrifying dream which has so upset me that it keeps me awake at night. I can think of nothing else and I have only been playing at cards to free my mind of agonized forebodings. As for the money, an Englishman may lose more than he can afford, but never more than he can pay. I shall return this money the first day we are in England, and shall find some way of proving my appreciation and gratitude in an appropriate manner."

Thinking that it might relieve his mind, I suggested that he tell us of his dream.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am also under a terrible mental strain, for I carry a verbal message in code, to my Government. I am ignorant of its meaning, but I know from the manner and warning of those who gave it to me, that it is vitally important. I was warned to keep it clear in my brain, but not

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to repeat it aloud, even to myself, until I had reported it in the royal diplomatic chamber. I shall, nevertheless, take some comfort in unfolding my strange dream to you who are, I am sure, my sincere friends. This is my dream.

“I lay awake, shivering with fear, surrounded by a multitude of masks and faces and shadowy forms. One came apart from the others and addressed me: ‘Oh, neglectful one, thy carelessness shall bleed a nation bare!’ Just then the clock struck twelve and there bounded into the room one blacker than the rest. ‘It’s my property,’ he cried, ‘as the measurements prove.’ and he flung himself upon me. ‘See, there is not a jot’s difference from finger tip to finger tip, nor from head to toe; he is my own and to my home must go.’

“He forced me through my berth, down through the bottom of the boat to the very depths of the sea, and on downwards through submarine labyrinths. We stopped for nothing, nor could anything have stopped us. The deeper we sank, the tighter the hold on me grew.

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“ ‘Who are you? Where are we going?’
I cried in terror.

“ ‘I am the one on the other side called the “Shadow,” ’ he cried. ‘I have been led by you for years, into many places that were distasteful to me, though I was never consulted, I never complained. Now it is my turn, and you are going to my domains, where are garnered the riches of the world. You will appreciate the life there, as it is shorn of hypocrisy and safe from the necromancy of that old sham “Sol” who has hoodwinked you so long. I was before, and shall be after him.’

“On the Shadow swept with me, making his own path as we went deeper and deeper, forcing huge boulders and solid rocks to open like clams, to receive us at one end and pass us out at the other in a like manner. As I was dragged through niches in the wall, the rattling of the dried bones, which we shoved aside, would cause my flesh to creep, and I kept the fingers of one hand pressing together my nostrils to avoid the rank odor that arose, as we passed through what had been a sepulchre.

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“We passed a stratum that must have been the surface of the earth thousands of centuries ago, and we saw buried cities of the strangest architecture. The ways had become darker and darker until now they were like pitch. Suddenly my guide stopped and listened. He asked if I heard the striking of a clock. I answered Yes, as I counted twelve. ‘We are nearing the city,’ said he, ‘and soon you shall have a light that is illuminating indeed, and your greatest expectations will be humbled by magnificent realities, and each new exhilarating incident will be shattered by an event greater still.’

“We came to a dropping off place, which filled me with fear and caused my head to swim. Just before taking the plunge we were stopped by an old hag, who had driven up the perpendicular wall of the chasm in a golden chariot, drawn by two huge snarling rats. She offered for sale a ticket to Proserpine’s midnight ball and spat at me when I refused to buy. Her sputum, missing me, struck a rock which at once became as the refuse of a dissecting table, and wherever she stood she polluted that spot. I thought

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to myself that if at this point things are so virulent and pestilential how horrible and intolerable they must be at the centre of the earth.

“The next second we were off in space, going down, down, lower, lower, each second doubling our speed. Little did I think we would survive this terrific plunge, but we alighted as if drifting on a snow-flake near-by what the Shadow called the City, but what seemed to me more like a cesspool.

“‘We shall soon be there,’ he said, ‘and for the present you must content yourself with admiring the exquisite infamy of these pastimes.’

“We swiftly sped through the now crowded lanes that led to the city’s gate. I heard the weird tolling of the bell and counted twelve, and asked, ‘What was that?’ He answered, ‘Midnight.’ Again I heard, and asked. Again he answered, ‘Midnight.’ Again and again I heard the same tolling, and asked the same question, and as often he answered, ‘Midnight.’ ‘Why,’ said I, ‘it was midnight many hours ago, when I first heard the striking of the clock.’

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“ ‘Here,’ said he, ‘is proved that darkness is natural and light artificial; it was midnight at the beginning, it is midnight now, and it will be midnight at the ending.’

“Still the everlasting ringing, chiming and striking of midnight did not prevent me from hearing lugubrious wailings, howlings and gnashings of teeth, and peering down through an opening I saw a roaring, crackling world of fire that scorched my very cheeks and singed my hair. Suddenly I was startled by a peal of thunder that shook the earth, resounding and echoing back and forth, unloosening huge stones from their fastenings.

“ ‘It is the crack of doom,’ I cried.

“ ‘Pshaw!’ said my guide, ‘it is merely the baaing of the old sheep that guards the gate.’

“In the centre of the gate was a platform and on the platform stood a giant with the head of a goat and the body of a man. He saluted us most blandly and said:

“ ‘I am the doorkeeper. While I could if I chose, I never have been so mean as to

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refuse entrance to any one, and I am kept so busy receiving guests that I never get a wink of sleep. What a city you are entering! How majestic in appearance! How superb in reality! In possibilities how resourceful! In entertainments, how elaborate! With what foresight were the architectural plans! An entrance so large that it will admit all, and an exit so small that it will emit none!

“He now held out the filthiest and coarsest paw that I had ever seen, and said, ‘This, my right hand, accepts all, and my left is too polite to refuse anything, and though blood is our mammon and blood our toll, we shall be content with just your soul.’

“I was so entranced by a bevy of beautiful women that surrounded him that I paid little attention to what he was saying, but like one stricken with fright, I stood glued to the spot.

“The poor nude creatures seemed to realize their shame and covered their eyes with their arms and bent their heads to the very middle of their bodies, allowing the ends of

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their long jet black hair, glistening like diamonds, to trail in the dust.

“The beast continued: ‘There are a great many handsome and clever men about, but I am so indulgent and tender, my kiss so inviting and entrancing, and my beard tickles so joyously that they will have no other.’

“And this demon, old, worthless and worn out by debauchery, proud of his holdings, totally without consideration for the happiness of these poor women, egotistic in the belief that it was his own personality that held them, began to strut about, his chest expanding more and more. As he gloated and ranted, his whole body began to swell to an enormous size, all out of proportion, and in swaying back and forth he lost his balance and fell from the platform to the ground below. His grin and leer changed to a look of fright and pain. He wriggled and twisted, his eye balls glared; he sputtered and spat and became a monster horrible to behold.

Suddenly, all his wives, screaming wildly, rushed in between his wide opened jaws.

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Immediately the beast was thrown into convulsions, and as he rolled and twisted, he plowed up several acres of land. Amid his groans, there was a deafening explosion within, and he belched forth a million shapely and bewitching little flappers in the brightest colors, blushing and smiling as they scurried off in different directions, as if each had a mission to perform. At first, their beauty seemed only to cover still more fascinating charms, but as they flittered by, I was horrified to discover that their faces were made up, their finger tips were tiger-like claws; their tongues long and forked, and each wink discharged a stinging dart of fire.

“ ‘As you perceive,’ said the Shadow, ‘these are the breeding grounds of vice. Did you note how the young ones were passed through the living furnace to advance their maturity, and to dry their cherubic wings, which otherwise would have been wet, as they arose from their larvae. Now as dry as the Arabic sands and fully developed, they burst forth in all the splendor of the allurements of hell, and they are like bees.

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There are a million or more, and every one will return and not one alone.'

"As we passed through the gate the time-piece of eternity pealed its chimes, 'Midnight.' I beheld suspended in the air, long bony ghostly hands, grasping blood-dripping arrows that pointed to skillfully-executed pictures which were on either side of the walk. Pictures of church yards yawning and gruesome murders being committed. On the top of the tarnished frames of these masterpieces, like sentinels, perched ravens, heralds of woe and black as soot. The attendants of these galleries, for the sake of harmony, wore death mask hoods and on their long black coats of crepe were paintings of skull and cross bones, and of the flames everlasting that arise from the grates of hell.

"An ugly little devil, to satisfy a loathsome snake, gored a maiden, and held her until the reptile had quenched its thirst. Here all derived their sustenance through the blood of the weak.

" 'The earth,' said my escort, 'is a huge nut with the usual rough and unkept outer



“EVERY ONE WILL RETURN AND
NOT ONE ALONE”

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shell, with the luscious kernel within, which grows richer as you near the centre, but these are dull times and this mere trivial play. If you were passing this way at the end of the harvesting, when the division begins, you would see real life. Each demon demands all or nothing. Mutiny and insurrection hold sway. They unchain the hounds of hell, and remove the stopper from the sink of iniquity, flooding the whole region with crime. Luxurious rape, murder and carnage abound, and blood flows so freely that the old and young come rushing in from all parts and remove their shoes and stockings to wade and splash in the puddles it makes, and all will seem so exquisite that you will readily pay for it with your soul.'

"We were now near the busy section of the city. Considering the mountains formed of dead bodies, charnel house would be a more fitting name. While my heart had not weakened, the stench that arose so irritated my stomach as to cause incessant vomiting. I heard shriek after shriek of pain, and the most uncanny and sickening laughter. There

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was that about this laughter that was familiar, but to save me I could not place it.

“Here misery gloried in its work, as the inhabitants wallowed in iniquity. Each one to his favorite vice, giving vent to the great pleasure derived by their hideous faces becoming more frightful still.

“The denser the darkness, the better grew my sight, which now penetrated my closed lids. Amid doleful cries and weird chimes I saw infants strangled without the least show of pity; one-eyed cyclopic giants snatch up children by their heels and after smashing their brains out against the walls, eat bones and all; rough, uncouth and unshaven men, wearing muddy, hobnailed boots, drag young girls aside by their hair and, in accomplishing their desire, tear them beyond repair. The wretched victims pleaded in vain for mercy, finding relief only in unconsciousness as they fainted away beneath the rum-soaked breath and boar-like caresses of their assailants.

“How I tried to free myself! I had no fear, but a mighty desire to make a stand

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against them all. With all my strength I tried to break away from Shadow, but all in vain. I turned my head and at the top of my voice begged of God to take away my sight.

“This cannot be real! I must be laboring under a loathsome fever. ‘There is no hell—I am dreaming!’ I cried, and plowed my nails into my flesh to find if I were awake. I paid no attention to a big burly brute, who called out to his comrades at our approach, ‘Look, fellows, here comes the Shadow with another candidate for death.’ Yet I could not prevent a cold shudder from running over me at the never ceasing pleadings of blood for more blood like a spoiled infant for its milk. Though we had passed through multitudinous strata, though we were now covered by mountains of granite, still no depth nor covering could shut off the agonizing sounds of midnight that now came from every quarter. Sometimes harsh and loud, other times soft and faint, a mere whispering, but always gloating in my ear, ‘Midnight.’

“A horrible individual called our atten-

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tion to a weird creature wabbling under a heavy burden. Pointing his finger at him, he said: 'Poaching has been so good of late that old faithful, Death, has enlarged his game bag.' This so pleased my guide that, holding me tighter than ever, he stopped and watched Death dump the dead from his sack, and even shivered himself as he saw Death tread over the bodies in his haste to return to his hunting grounds.

"A sudden commotion in the heap brought to an end the feasting of the dogs and vultures. The bodies began to move and squirm, still entangled like a tank of reptiles. Finally extricating themselves, they arose and encircling old Faithful, began the weird dance of the dead. The honored one did not seem to cherish the attentions that were being showered upon him. On his gluttonous face eagerness gave way to consternation, and consternation to fright. His hair straightened and stood on end and he broke through the lines in flight that took him through the main thoroughfares with the rejuvenated bodies at his heels, some with

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their heads half severed flapping up and down as they ran.

“Now I was roughly carried to the very centre and laid down with my head resting on a large block, which reeked with blood. The very stalactites above became writhing, hissing serpents. Suddenly, above the tumult, above the hissing, howling and wailing, a clear, ever-to-be-remembered voice of warning cried out, ‘Place thy confidence in the Lord.’ As this voice spoke, everything was hushed; not even the hiss of a snake nor the ripple of blood could be heard.

“‘Too late!’ yelled the executioner, as he shook his gory locks and raised his axe aloft, uttering the same chuckle that I had heard before. I knew it belonged to one whom I had reckoned among my friends, but to save me I could not remember whom. With a quick, powerful stroke, my head was severed and I at once passed from the ordeal of the Shadow to a blaze of glory, and was about to feast my eyes on celestial affairs, when I awoke in a dripping perspiration.

“Now, gentlemen, I have told you the cause of my depression, and still feel the

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same as I did when I was being carried downwards, and saw horror after horror, and pinched myself to learn if I dreamed. I now ask you, 'Am I really awake, or do I still dream?'

"We answered, 'You are surely awake now.'

"But that miserable Shadow answered in just as positive a manner as you, and I thought I felt the pain of the pinch as I do now. I cannot help thinking that misery is a short dream before eternal felicity, like a disagreeable medicine before the cure, and that tomorrow I shall awake and find myself resting in my couch on high, and as I rub my eyes shall say, 'I have had a dream and in that dream many smaller ones.'"

I here ventured that he was too bright a man to be so worried about a dream. I, myself, had experienced an unpleasant dream the night we had the late supper, but had paid no attention to it.

At the suggestion of the Count, we strolled around for a half hour or so, then decided to have our "night-cap" and retire,

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since we were to be awakened at seven in the morning and disembark at ten. We entered the smoking room and found it occupied only by Colonel Rockinghorse, who sat sleeping in his chair, snoring, with his mouth wide open.

The Count, Livingston and myself did not take our usual seats, but chose a table just back of the door. We ordered our drinks, and, as we were about to raise them to our lips, the Count suddenly discovered a speck in Livingston's glass. With his usual suave politeness he insisted that Livingston change glasses with him. In another moment the drinks were finished.

Glancing towards Rockinghorse, I noticed the old gentleman had aroused himself, and, as he sat with his back to us, he was peering intently into a small pocket mirror as if admiring his whiskers. I could not refrain from a little good-natured raillery at his conceit.

By this time Livingston had braced up considerably. The Count, nevertheless, insisted that we see our friend to his cabin and

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help him get ready for bed. He even made Livingston promise to bolt his door on the inside, and waited outside until he heard the bolt slide into place. Even then, he was so much afraid that worry might drive our friend to something desperate that he paid the steward to watch the cabin during the night.

CHAPTER IX.

A PREMONITION COME TRUE.

I AROSE early the next morning and, as I was making my way to the bath, I heard an unusual commotion on the other side of the steamer. I hurried over and found the Count, with several stewards, at Livingston's cabin, calling his name and pounding on his door. The Count was getting more and more excited, yelling at the top of his voice and expressing a fear that something terrible had happened.

"It is very strange," he said, "he answered my first knock, now we can get no response at all."

"Get an ax and chop in the door!" suggested Colonel Rockinghorse.

"Yes, yes! We must get in there quickly! Something has happened to Livingston!" wailed the Count. "Here, help me to the transom."

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"That is not necessary," protested the Colonel, "we will have the ax in a moment."

He spoke too late. With the aid of several passengers, the Count had already mounted to the transom and crawled through. There was a thump as he jumped to the floor on the inside. Then a shriek of horror from within the room told us the worst had happened. The Count unbolted the door and stumbled out, sobbing hysterically that our poor friend had taken his own life.

We rushed into the room and discovered the ghastly figure lying on the bed. There was my friend of yesterday, his throat cut so deeply that his head was almost severed from his body. My senses reeled at the sight. I thought of his dream. So the Count was justified in his fears and Livingston had come to the awful deed which, I felt sure, was far from his thoughts when I left him the night before.

"It is brooding over these things that drives one to such acts," said the Count. "One of us should have remained with him."

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I will never forgive myself." And he broke down and wept like a child.

The Captain had just appeared, and was pushing his way through the crowd to the bed.

"Suicide?" he asked with a shudder.

"I am afraid," muttered the Colonel to him, "that you have more to deal with than a mere suicide. And since we are in British waters, you'd better summon the coroner."

There was a rushing to and fro, a ringing of bells and a blowing of whistles, and the whole steamer was in an uproar as, simultaneously with the above incident, the ship, which had been slowed up for the pilot, came to a standstill at the cry of "Man overboard!" A seaman, in lowering a ladder, had lost his balance and fallen into the sea, but he was picked up in an unconscious condition by the crew of the pilot-boat and we proceeded on our way minus a seaman.

CHAPTER X.

THE INQUEST.

WHEN several of the fellow-passengers of Colonel Rockinghorse were, through his instrumentality, summoned to the coroner's inquest as witnesses, they were not a little annoyed and expressed the opinion rather emphatically that the old gentleman was a bit over-industrious. Nevertheless, a number of us who were stopping at the same hotel walked to the court with him on the morning of the inquest.

An irascible Mr. Barton in our party was very much put out, for his enforced delay caused him to miss a week-end's shooting in Scotland. He was rather on the lookout for some object upon which to vent his wrath, and consequently, when a careless young man trod upon his foot, Mr. Barton grabbed him by the collar despite his apologies.

"Oh, you apologize, do you? Do you think that will relieve the pain you have

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caused me? Do you think for a moment that I shall be content with an apology? For fifty years I have been passing through thoroughfares as crowded as this, and I've never trod on another's toe because I am always looking at what I am doing, and, if I should be so stupid, I'd be expected to be treated thus"—and he planted his foot in the seat of the young man's trousers with such force that it seemed to pass entirely through his body as it lifted him several feet in the air.

We had proceeded only a few steps farther when we were brought to a halt by the following:

"Who'll buy my heggs? Freshly lied heggs! Guinea heggs, goose heggs. Lords and Leidies, by heggs hoff hof me. If you don't care to heat heggs, put em in your hincubators. Ha guarantee goes with heach hegg to 'atch han 'ealthy blumin' duck. What's more 'omelike than ha flock of ducks in your garden? 'Heven 'is 'ighness loves ha blumin' duck."

"Thank you, mum, teik the word hof 'onest Habe, you will be back for more."

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"I'll buy four dozen of your eggs," spoke up Mr. Barton, "but I wish to pick them out myself."

He then had the peddler fold his arms, and when he had finished filling them with forty-eight eggs, he suddenly began to pour upon the fellow a stream of abuse, fully qualified with a profusion of adjectives that only Mr. Barton possessed, calling him a swindler and cheat for charging such prices, while the surprised and indignant peddler stood helpless and unable to move lest he break his eggs. Finally, as a parting blow, though in the very heart of Mayfair, he quickly unfastened the poor fellow's braces, allowing his trousers to fall to the ground, and left the helpless vender protesting wildly, with the tails of his shirt being wafted to and fro by the spring zephyrs, amusing the passers-by, who laughed gleefully.

Now our attention was diverted from this horseplay to something more serious, for we had arrived at the coroner's where an autopsy had already been held over Livingston's body. We learned that Colonel Rockinghorse had been very anxious that an ex-

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amination be made to ascertain whether or not any poison had entered Livingston's stomach.

The autopsy had revealed no trace of poison, and the Colonel's theory of murder seemed badly shaken. In consequence, the case was about to be dismissed when orders came from Scotland Yards to investigate the case thoroughly and hold and question all witnesses carefully because new evidence had just been secured. While these proceedings were extraordinary, they were not contrary to the laws of England.

Several witnesses, including Count Hiro-saka, the cabin steward and myself, were examined, but nothing important was brought to light. Finally, Colonel Rockinghorse was called to the stand.

"Colonel Rockinghorse," asked the Coroner, "when and where did you last see Mr. Livingston alive?"

"On Wednesday evening, July ninth, at eleven o'clock."

"Please describe the circumstances."

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"I was sitting alone in the smoking room of the steamer when Mr. Livingston, accompanied by Count Hirosaka and some others, entered the room, sat at a table behind me and ordered drinks. I became interested because I had learned of the many favors the Count had extended this same man. How he had loaned him his money, and how earnestly he had endeavored to stop him from gambling, and I had begun to think the Count not such a bad one after all.

"Still, I could not help thinking it strange that he should shower these unusual attentions on one who had been a complete stranger a few days past. Besides, there were other young men who had lost heavily at the game and he had shown no inclination to extend his benevolency in their direction. Recalling that Livingston was in the diplomatic service of England, and having seen the Count catering to this set about Washington, I said to myself, 'the Oriental has some fish to fry, and will bear watching.'

"In fact, my suspicions were so aroused that when the next moment I saw him exchange glasses with Livingston, I attempted

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to warn the young man not to drink, but he had finished the glass ere I could speak. I was very much worried over the incident and when the gentlemen left the room I followed them to Livingston's cabin and watched them assist him to retire. Suddenly, Hirosaka, unobserved by the others, turned to the dresser, hurriedly took something from it and slipped it into his pocket. They left the room then, the Count insisting that Livingston bolt his door on the inside, and hired a steward to watch outside."

"Did you go to bed and sleep that night as usual?" asked the Coroner.

"No. I was worried over what Livingston had drunk. I got up in the middle of the night and engaged in conversation with the steward who was watching so that I might listen to Livingston's breathing. It was a little heavier than normal, but did not seem serious."

"Have you any reasons for suspecting foul play?" queried the Coroner.

"There was that about the whole affair

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that was unusual, and when I see anything out of the ordinary I ask myself, 'Why?' I was satisfied that something was sure to happen. I was the first of all the passengers to arise the next morning, and went direct to the deceased's quarters. While I stood there, I saw the barber open up his shop and immediately took advantage of this and was shaved ahead of the rush.

"As I was passing from the shop, which was just opposite Livingston's cabin, I saw Count Hirosaka go up to the door and knock. He claims that Livingston answered. I claim that, though I am a little advanced in years, I still am as able to hear as the Count or any other living man, and when he says he received an answer to his knock, he lies.

"I am satisfied that Livingston was encouraged to gamble until his losses were so enormous that he did not have the money to pay, and that the required amount was thrust upon him to humiliate him in the belief that if it did not drive him to suicide, it would establish a friendship that would help shield the perpetrator of a villainous



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plot already laid as a last resort. The victim's confidence gained, friendship established and thoroughly advertised, the possibility of suicide well circulated, all that now was needed was a sound sleeping potion and to be the first in the cabin. The carrier of a dangerous message would be destroyed, and no suspicion against anyone but the murdered."

"Colonel Rockinghorse, did you know what message the deceased was carrying from United States to England?"

"It was a verbal message—one of such immense importance, as I have learned since arriving in England, that, had he delivered it, there would not have been consummated the alliance between Great Britain and Japan which was signed yesterday morning."

Just as the Coroner had finished questioning the Colonel, Inspector Cough of Scotland Yards entered, leading a sailor who was immediately put in the witness box.

"What is your name?" questioned the Coroner.

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"Timothy Flaherty," answered the witness.

"Are you a seaman aboard Her Majesty's Steamer ——?"

"Yes, your Honor."

"Then tell us in your own way what you saw Thursday morning, the tenth day of this month."

"I was lowering the rope ladder when it became caught on the side of the steamer. I climbed down to unfasten it and, as I passed by the port hole of Cabin A, I saw a man jump from the transom, hurry across the room, jerk the covers off the occupant of the berth and violently draw a razor across the throat of the occupant. I screamed in my excitement, lost my balance and, striking my head against the side of the steamer, fell into the sea."

The inspector looked directly at the Jap and motioned two officers to seize him. The Count struggled to his feet, greatly agitated and pale as death. He made his decision instantly. With all the power and agility of

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his race he tore himself free from his guards. He crossed the room with a bound, forced his head through the center rods of the office railing and drove his body in a back somersault over the top, breaking every bone in his neck. There he hung, with his eyes bulging from their sockets, his purple tongue protruding from his mouth and a fixed, taunting grin of triumph on his face. We turned away from this horrible spectacle, but it mocks me to this day.

“He was a murderer,” muttered Colonel Rockinghorse brokenly, “but not an ordinary one. What he did he did for the country he served. While he is a foul murderer in our eyes, in Nippon he will be praised and remembered as a martyred hero who lived and died for his country. This is the way of the world—what one condemns another upholds; what one repels another attracts, giving the earth its equilibrium as it goes whirling through space, but holding humanity in the same old place, as the village pump.”

THE END.



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